

REPORT TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 21 February 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Finance

PORTFOLIO: Children & Young People

SUBJECT: DSG High Needs Block 2024-25

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To update and seek Schools' Forum recommendations on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2024-25 for the High Needs Block.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the contents of this report are noted.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement**

The 2024-25 DSG settlement was announced on 19th December 2023 allocating Halton a total of £154.497m, which is broken down as £111.188m for the Schools Block, £0.747m for the Central Schools Services Block, £27.007m for the High Needs Block, and £15.554m for the Early Years Block.

3.2 **High Needs Block**

The High Needs Block allocation has been announced as £27.007m before Academy and Further Education (FE) recoupment, but including the deduction in respect to net exports of SEND children being educated in other areas.

Academy and FE recoupment will be £3.180m for the per place funding element deductions as identified by the DfE published allocations. No intra block transfers have been applied this year. For 2024-25 Halton has £23.827m for distribution to specialist provisions and to contribute to supporting the ongoing cost pressures being faced by the High Needs block.

Schools' Forum are requested to note the funding rates to be applied to the High Needs block allocations on the basis of Place-Plus (top-up) funding for specialist provision including Mainstream SEND Units.

Mainstream Schools with Resource Units - Funding 2024-25

Mainstream units are funded on a Place-Plus basis where the Place funding element is set at £6,000 per Occupied place and £11,000 for Un-Occupied places. The Occupied rate is only £6,000 as it is expected that the children being supported in the special units will be on roll at the school and are therefore included in the main school formula funding allocation – so called Notional funding.

The Plus element is the top-up funding provided for occupied places and subject to Forum approval as per the table below.

| School / Academy | Unit | 2023-24 rounded | 2024-25 rounded | 2024-25 Uplift |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Primary</u> | | £ | £ | % |
| Weston Point | EBD | 5,355 | 5,462 | 2% |
| Halton Lodge | SEMH | 6,051 | 6,172 | 2% |
| The Brow | Assessment | 3,174 | 3,237 | 2% |
| Woodside | EBD | 4,331 | 4,418 | 2% |
| Beechwood | SEMH | 6,089 | 6,211 | 2% |
| Kingsway Academy (Simms Cross) | ASD KS1/2 | 4,793 | 4,889 | 2% |
| Oakfield | Assessment | 4,343 | 4,430 | 2% |
| The Grange | ASD KS1/2 | 6,164 | 6,287 | 2% |
| <u>Secondary</u> | | | | |
| The Grange | ASD KS3/4 | 7,044 | 7,185 | 2% |
| Sts Peter & Paul | ASD KS3/4 | 5,747 | 5,862 | 2% |

Special Schools and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Special Schools and PRUs are funded on a Place-Plus basis where the Place funding element is set at £11,000 per Occupied or Un-Occupied places. For Special Schools the Plus element is the top-up funding provided for occupied places only and is based on a Banding system which recognises the severity of SEND and associated support requirements in accordance with the individual pupils' Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The top-up banding values vary per school due to recognising the differing running costs of each school.

The PRU top up value is intended to contribute to all running costs including vocational courses for pupils. Where schools and academies commission any places directly with the PRU then they are responsible for funding the top-up element.

Plus (top-up) Funding per Special School and PRU:

| School | Banding | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2024-25 Uplift |
|----------------------|---------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| | | £ | £ | % |
| Ashley | Level 1 | 7,995 | 8,155 | 2% |
| | Level 2 | 10,658 | 10,871 | 2% |
| | Level 3 | 16,010 | 16,330 | 2% |
| Chesnut Lodge | Level 1 | 10,661 | 10,874 | 2% |

| | | | | |
|------------------|---------|--------|--------|----|
| | Level 2 | 12,776 | 13,032 | 2% |
| | Level 3 | 16,094 | 16,416 | 2% |
| Brookfields | Level 1 | 6,515 | 6,645 | 2% |
| | Level 2 | 9,844 | 10,041 | 2% |
| | Level 3 | 16,578 | 16,910 | 2% |
| Cavendish | Level 1 | 8,158 | 8,321 | 2% |
| | Level 2 | 10,699 | 10,913 | 2% |
| | Level 3 | 15,941 | 16,260 | 2% |
| The Bridge - PRU | Level 1 | 16,269 | 16,594 | 2% |

For transparency, all Special Schools and the PRU will be provided with confirmation of their 2024-25 budget allocations with an individual notification highlighting all funding factors, values, termly payment profile, and ESFA recoupment where applicable.

Further Education (FE) Element 3 Top-Up Funding

The High Needs DSG statutory guidance stipulates that the Local Authority must treat FE establishments fairly and consistently when making arrangements to fund young people with high needs.

Halton proposes to apply a 2% uplift to FE element 3 funding with effect from April 2024. The cost of this uplift will be covered within the overall DSG 2% uplift.

Schools' Forum are therefore requested to support the uplift for 2024-25 as outlined above.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The financial aspects outlined throughout this paper have been developed accordance with statutory financial regulations and operational guidance relevant to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) requirements.

4.2 The proposals included within this paper are all funded from within the available Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) block allocations provided for 2024/25.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy, and receive their entitlement of high quality services that are sensitive to need, inclusive and accessible to all.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

To create an economically prosperous Borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth, and improves the education, skills and employment prospects of our residents and workforce so they can share in all the opportunities Halton affords.

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

None

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

None

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to comply with the statutory financial regulations and operational guidance relevant to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) requirements could result in formal intervention by the Department for Education (DfE).

6.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The Local Authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

7.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

None.

8.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Background papers and further information, including the statutory guidance that has informed this report, can be obtained via Gov.uk

For any enquiries contact Naheem.Shafiq@halton.gov.uk.